

ORGAN DONATION

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, recently, we celebrated National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week and today I recognize the medical advances that have made organ transplantation a viable treatment option. Thanks to those who have given the gift of life, more than 20,000 individuals received an organ transplant in 1996.

However, each year, the number of organs donated in the United States falls tragically short of the need. Sadly, more than 55,000 people are on the national organ transplant waiting list and about 10 will die each day as the waiting lists continue to grow.

Organ donation is increasing, but not fast enough to come close to meeting the need. In recent years, progress has been made in creating awareness of the need for organ donation. Most Americans indicate they support organ donation. Nonetheless, only about 50 percent of families asked to donate a loved one's organs agree to do so. Moreover, thousands of opportunities to donate are missed each year, either because families do not know what their loved ones wanted, or because potential donors are not identified for organ procurement organizations and their families are never asked.

To address these barriers to donation, government and private sector partnerships must be focused on * * *

* * * that we from government and the private sector. But most importantly, we need volunteers willing to share the gift of life. To achieve this goal, there must be an emphasis on increasing consent to donation and referrals to organ procurement organizations.

However, we must also ensure that our social and work environments are amenable to persons serving as donors. That is why I urge support of my legislation H.R. 457, the Organ Donor Leave Act, which would provide federal employees an additional 7 days to serve as a bone-marrow donor, and 30 days to serve as an organ donor.

Passage of this measure would stand as a model for private employees to amend their personnel policies to grant additional paid leave to living donors who give bone marrow, a kidney, or other organs.

Without donors, transplant surgeons cannot save even one life. With just one donor, they can save and improve as many as 50 lives. I believe that we must all pledge to join the national community of organ and tissue sharing by closing the gap between donated organs and tissue and the people who need them.

With this commitment, we pave the way for our nation to be able to answer the hopes and needs of those who now wait too long for a second chance at life.

I urge support of H.R. 457 and challenge all Americans to say "yes" to organ and tissue donation.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

H.R. 1660, PUBLIC SCHOOL
MODERNIZATION ACT OF 1999**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today, along with many of my colleagues, I am introducing legislation, entitled the Public School Modernization Act of 1999, which consists of two education tax incentives that are contained in the President's budget recommendations for fiscal year 2000. I am very pleased that 88 Members have joined me as cosponsors of this needed legislation. I cannot imagine a better way to honor our teachers on "Teacher Appreciation Day" than to work toward modernized schools, smaller classes, and other educational improvements in our public schools.

I will continue to work with the Administration to introduce the President's domestic initiatives that are within the jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee. I also will continue to urge consideration by the Congress of these important proposals.

The most important challenge facing this country today is the need to improve our educational system. Expanding educational opportunities is crucial to our country's social and economic well being.

I have a personal interest in improving the quality of education for all students. Through the GI bill, this country made an investment in my education that provided me with a needed second chance after the Korean War. I believe that we must give all public school children a second chance so that they can make a positive contribution to society by making the most of their abilities through educational opportunities.

I am very excited that the President emphasize education in his State of the Union address and that his budget recommendations contain a comprehensive program to improve our public school system. The bill that we are introducing today contains two important tax provisions that will help modernize our public schools, reduce class sizes, and expand education-based training opportunities for students most in need.

I recognize that these tax provisions alone are not the total answer to our country's need to improve our educational system. Therefore, I also am a strong supporter of the other education improvements included in the President's budget.

Many children today are attending school in trailers or in dilapidated school buildings. We cannot expect learning to occur in those environments. Other students are forced into huge classes, making it difficult for students to learn and difficult for teachers to help students on an individual basis. Using tax credits, this bill would provide approximately \$24 billion in interest-free funds for school modernization projects. This bill is a meaningful first step in addressing the problem of crowded and dilapidated school facilities.

Recent events have underscored the need for increased school safety measures in many public schools. While these are by no means the only answers, reducing class size and pro-

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viding safe and modern schools will help children get off to the right start and will help teachers more easily recognize and serve those students who may need special attention. In order for our children to learn, they must not be afraid to attend school. Safe schools are a necessity—and a priority. In addition to smaller classes, this legislation will provide the means for school districts to modernize other safety and educational features in the public schools.

We must also do more to provide education and training opportunities for students who do not go on to college. We have existing programs, like the empowerment zone legislation, that provide targeted incentives to encourage economic development in depressed urban and rural areas. While these incentives are important, employers in the targeted areas assert that they are unable to hire qualified individuals to work in the jobs created by the investment programs.

The bill speaks to this problem by extending and enhancing the education zone proposal that was enacted on a limited basis in the 1997 Taxpayer Relief Act. This program is designed to create working partnerships between public and private entities to improve education and training opportunities for students in high poverty rural and urban areas.

Some have argued that the Federal government should have no role in assisting the public school system at the K through 12 level. I disagree strongly. The federal government historically has provided financial resources to the public school system. It has done so in part by providing tax-exempt bond financing that enables State and local governments to fund capital needs through low-interest loans. The bill that we are introducing today, in many respects, is very similar to tax-exempt bond financing. This bill does not require any additional layers of bureaucracy at the Federal or State level. It provides special tax benefits to holders of certain State and local education bonds. The procedures used to determine whether bonds are eligible for those special benefits are substantially the same as the procedures applicable currently in determining whether a State or local bond is eligible for tax-exempt bond financing.

I also want to be very clear that this bill supports our public school system. I believe that improving our public school system should be our highest priority. Approximately 90 percent of the students attending kindergarten through grade 12 attend public schools. If we can find the resources to provide additional tax incentives, those incentives should be focused on improving the public school system that serves such a large segment of our student population. I have and will continue to oppose legislation, such as the so-called "Coverdell" legislation, that diverts scarce resources away from our public school system.

The Republicans are promoting a change in the tax-exempt bond arbitrage rules which they say is a meaningful response to the problem of dilapidated and crowded school buildings. Under current law, a school district issuing construction bonds can invest the bond proceeds temporarily in higher-yielding investments and retain the arbitrage profits if

the bond proceeds are used for school construction within two years. The Republican arbitrage proposal would extend the period during which those arbitrage profits could be earned from two to four years. The Republican proposal does not benefit those districts with immediate needs to renovate and construct schools. It benefits only districts that can delay completion of school construction for more than 2 years. It is inadequate at best. At worst, it may increase costs for those districts most in need because more bonds could be issued earlier.

Today's bill includes a provision that would extend the Davis-Bacon requirements to construction funded under the new program. This provision is consistent with the policy that Federally-subsidized construction projects should pay prevailing wage rates. The bill also includes provisions designed to ensure that local workers and contractors are able to participate in the construction projects.

Amazingly, while the concept of investing in human capital goes unchallenged in debate, elected leaders are still spending more of our nation's limited budget resources on back-end, punitive programs like law enforcement and

prisons, rather than front-end investments like education and training that can really pay off in increased workforce productivity.

Unfortunately, these skewed priorities are present at the local level, too. New York City spends \$84,000 per year to keep a young man in Riker's Island Prison, yet only \$7,000 each year to educate a child in Harlem.

In addition, improving opportunities in education is a vital link in broader U.S. economic policy, including U.S. trade policy. Ensuring that our education system is strong, and that our children's education prepares them to take advantage of the economic opportunities our society has to offer, is essential to ensuring that the benefits of trade and trade agreements extend more deeply and fully throughout our society.

We must change our priorities. Let's invest in the future of this country through our children. Let's bring the same zeal to encouraging and educating our children that we now apply to punishment and incarceration.

The following is a brief description of the provisions contained in our bill. They would cost approximately \$3.3 billion over the first 5 years.

Year	Current law	Additions under bill	Total issuance cap
1998	\$400 million .....	.....	\$400 million
1999	\$400 million .....	.....	\$400 million
2000 .....	.....	\$1 billion	\$1.0 billion
2001 .....	.....	\$1.4 billion	\$1.4 billion

The bill would make several technical modifications to the 1997 legislation. It would repeal the provision that restricts ownership of qualified zone academy bonds to financial institutions, it would change the formula used in determining the credit rate, it would provide for quarterly allowances of the credit to coincide with estimated tax payment dates and permit credit stripping in order to improve the marketability of the bonds, it would require a maximum maturity of 15 years, rather than a maximum maturity determined under a formula, it would change the formula for allocating the national limit to make it consistent with the formula used in allocating the limit on qualified school construction bonds, and it would provide an indefinite carryover of any unused credit.

B. SPECIALIZED TRAINING CENTERS

The bill also includes a provision designed to encourage corporate contributions to specialized training centers located in empowerment zones or enterprise communities. A specialized training center is a public school (or special program within a public school) with an academic program designed in partnership with the corporation making the contribution. There is a limit of \$8 million per empowerment zone and \$2 million per enterprise community on the amount of contributions eligible for the new credit. The limit would be allocated among contributors by the local official responsible for the economic development program in the zone or community.

QUALIFIED SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BONDS

The bill would also permit State and local governments to issue qualified school construction bonds to fund the construction or rehabilitation of public schools. Interest on qualified school construction bonds would in effect be paid by the Federal government through an annual tax credit. The credit would be provided in the same manner as the credit for qualified zone academy bonds.

Under the bill, a total of \$11 billion of qualified school construction bonds could be issued in 2000 and in 2001. Half of the annual cap would be allocated among the States on the basis of their population of low-income children, weighted the State's expenditures per pupil for education (the Title I basic grant formula). The other half of the annual cap would be allocated among the hundred school districts with the highest number of low-income children and that allocation would be based on each district's Title I share. Before making the allocations described above, \$200 million in 2000 and 2001 would be reserved for allocation by the Secretary of the Interior for schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The following chart shows the aggregate amount of qualified school construction bonds and qualified zone academy bonds that could be issued in each State under the bill. The total includes amounts allocated to large school districts in the State. An additional \$750 million is reserved for allocations to other school districts not in the largest 100 districts.

[In thousands of dollars]		
State	Estimate	Allocation
Alabama	\$373,179	
Alaska	45,552	
Arizona	321,189	
Arkansas	191,361	
California	3,029,203	
Colorado	203,299	
Connecticut	195,615	
Delaware	46,746	
District of Columbia	113,625	
Florida	1,337,671	
Georgia	606,081	
Hawaii	49,685	
Idaho	55,825	
Illinois	1,125,357	
Indiana	326,773	
Iowa	135,205	
Kansas	154,208	
Kentucky	344,582	
Louisiana	596,956	
Maine	76,808	
Maryland	351,517	
Massachusetts	402,027	
Michigan	1,001,250	
Minnesota	266,123	
Mississippi	327,445	
Missouri	386,832	
Montana	62,924	
Nebraska	82,857	
Nevada	90,274	
New Hampshire	44,910	
New Jersey	526,789	
New Mexico	185,062	
New York	2,750,541	
North Carolina	390,043	
North Dakota	46,746	
Ohio	948,239	
Oklahoma	270,223	
Oregon	191,113	
Pennsylvania	1,007,919	
Puerto Rico	636,673	
Rhode Island	81,320	
South Carolina	261,777	
South Dakota	47,922	
Tennessee	396,843	
Texas	2,149,680	
Utah	84,796	
Vermont	43,847	
Virginia	317,458	
Washington	285,098	
West Virginia	177,753	
Wisconsin	418,781	
Wyoming	43,236	

EDUCATION ZONE PROVISIONS

A. Qualified Zone Academy Bonds

Section 226 of the 1997 Taxpayer Relief Act provides a source of capital at no or nominal interest for costs incurred by certain public schools in connection with the establishment of special academic programs from kindergarten through secondary schools. To be eligible to participate in the program, the public school must be located in an empowerment zone or enterprise community or at least 35 percent of the students at the school must be eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches under the Federal school lunch program. In addition the school must enter into a partnership with one or more nongovernmental entities.

The provision provides the interest-free capital by permitting the schools to issue special bonds called "Qualified Zone Academy Bonds." Interest on those bonds will in effect be paid by the Federal government through a tax credit to the holder.

The bill would increase the caps on the amount of bonds that can be issued under the program as shown in the following table. The bill would also permit the bonds to be used for new construction.

DAVIS-BACON REQUIREMENTS

The bill includes a provision that would extend the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements to construction funded under the new program. In order to ensure the marketability of the tax-subsidized financing, the Davis-Bacon requirements would be enforced by the Department of Labor and not through disallowance of tax benefits.

The bill also requires governments participating in the new program to give priority in awarding contracts to contractors with local

workforces and to require a priority for local workers for new hires. The bill contains modifications to the Workforce Investment Act to ensure the availability of skilled local workers for the construction.

REGARDING THE STATE OF
AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

HON. DAVID D. PHELPS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking my colleague Mr. BERRY for gathering us here to talk about the state of agriculture and the dire need for quick action on the Supplemental Appropriations measure. There is perhaps no more timely or pressing issue facing our nation's farmers and the legislators who represent them in Washington, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

The importance of agriculture to the families and economy of Illinois' 19th District cannot be overstated, and I am proud to serve on the Agriculture Committee, where I look forward to helping to shape our nation's agriculture policy. Every one of the communities I represent is deeply impacted when agriculture experiences tough times, and these are some of the toughest in recent memory.

The pork industry is still reeling from a crisis, and prices are low for other commodities that are critical to my district, such as corn and soybeans. The Natural Resource Conservation Service in Illinois and many other states is facing a major budget shortfall that will likely necessitate office closures or furloughs and has already resulted in the suspension of CRP technical assistance services that countless farmers depend upon. Farmers are experiencing undue delays in receiving disaster assistance and other USDA payments, and Farm Service Agency offices throughout the country are understaffed and overworked.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the urgency of this situation and hope we can work together to find both short- and long-term solutions to the problems that plague our agriculture community. It seems clear to me, in fact, that one short-term solution has already been found, in the form of a supplemental appropriations bill that includes \$152 million for USDA. This money will allow the Department to increase loan capacity by more than \$1 billion at a time when conditions in the agriculture economy have increased demand for USDA's farm loan programs by 400%. The funding will also provide desperately-needed temporary staffing assistance for FSA offices.

Unfortunately, it has been two months since the President submitted his supplemental spending request, and over a month since both houses passed their bills. Farmers are already in the fields planting crops and USDA is receiving 150 applications for loan assistance every day. Meanwhile, conferees have only this week been appointed to begin crafting a final supplemental measure, and there is no indication that this risk is being undertaken with the urgency it requires. We simply must pass this legislation now. America's farmers

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are counting on their representatives in Congress. We cannot let them down during this time of crisis.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. BERRY for demonstrating his commitment to American agriculture and urging us to speak out on this important issue.

THE SMART IDEA ACT OF 1999

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation that makes the point that Congress doesn't need to pit the needs of disabled children against the needs of non-disabled children in meeting our commitments with IDEA—the individuals with Disabilities Education Act. There are other alternatives available. As is often the case, Mr. Speaker, this Republican-controlled House lacks imagination when confronting important issues.

It is ironic that on National Teacher's Day we are pitting disabled children against their non-disabled classmates. Instead of depriving our schools of important funds from other federal education programs, as the Republicans suggest, I propose that we use an existing federal program to meet the obligations of IDEA. I think the Medicaid program is ideal for this approach.

The concept of my legislation is simple: after any school district has spent \$3,500 on a student who is eligible for IDEA funds, the school district can receive full federal funding from the Medicaid program for additional required services mandated under IDEA.

The idea behind IDEA was that children who are disabled must receive the assistance they need to achieve their academic potential. That's the right thing for those children and their families. It's also the right thing for America—so that every individual has the maximum chance to be a contributor.

But who pays has been a problem for many years. Especially problematic for cash-strapped schools are situations where extraordinary expenses are required for a severely disabled child. These expenses can "bust the budget" and pit the parents of disabled children against the parents of non-disabled children. Because of the high costs of providing special assistance to the disabled, it is believed that some school districts tend to overlook findings that assistance is needed. That is counter-productive to the goal of helping disabled children succeed in school. But it's hard to blame the schools. The necessary funding has never been provided by the state or federal governments for this great IDEA.

The use of Medicaid to fund IDEA solves most of these problems. Since the Federal government funds 50% of Medicaid, shifting extraordinary expenses to the Medicaid program would ensure that the Federal government does its part. Because the rest of Medicaid funding comes from the states, the use of Medicaid also would ensure that states do their fair share and don't shirk their obligations to local schools. Adoption of this proposal would remove the disincentive now in place

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for schools to avoid providing help to disabled children. Additionally, it would remove the animosity that can develop between the parents of disabled and non-disabled children for scarce resources.

I think this change makes a lot of sense and hope that a bipartisan majority can put solutions ahead of politics and pursue this plan. Let's not allow a lack of imagination and compassion to short-change all our kids and schools.

A TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF
LATON

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the community of Laton on celebrating their 100 year anniversary.

In 1902, Lewelyn A. Nares and Charles A. Laton acquired land near Kingsburg known as "The Laguna De Tache". Nares and Laton transferred title of their holdings to "Laguna Lands Limited" and Charles A. Laton soon disappeared from the local scene. Years later, a man named T.J. Saunders, an Iowa native, brought a group of businessmen to the area forming the nucleus for the city of Laton.

Laton has a rich history of community service. That tradition is exemplified by the strong ongoing commitment of the Volunteer Fire Department, the Lyon's Club, and other local organizations. In addition to providing a range of public services, each year the Laton community comes together for the Building Our Neighborhoods Drug Free (BOND) festival, which brings families together to celebrate Laton's drug-free environment. Community programs, including the BOND festival have made Laton one of the Central Valley's best places to raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the city of Laton in celebrating their 100th year as a successful and prosperous community.

HONORING THE JACK C. HAYS
HIGH SCHOOL REBEL BAND

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the Jack C. Hays High School Rebel Band of Austin, Texas, recently earned the distinct honor of being selected for the 1999 Sudley "Flag of Honor" award from the John Philip Sousa Foundation. This award is the highest recognition of excellence in concert performance that a high school band can receive. During the 17 years the award has been in existence, only 39 bands from the entire United States and Canada have been selected for the Flag of Honor. Conductor Gerald Babbitt and his Rebel band deserve our praise and recognition on the occasion of receiving this prestigious award.